

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL**

(1) DEPARTMENT Public Works	(2) MEETING DATE 1/12/2016	(3) CONTACT/PHONE Dean Benedix, Utilities Division Manager (805) 781-5267	
(4) SUBJECT Request approval to hire three (3) Wastewater Systems Workers, at pay level Steps 4 and 5, for the Los Osos Water Recycling Facility. District 2.			
(5) RECOMMENDED ACTION It is recommended that the Board approve hiring one Wastewater Systems Worker IV candidate at the Step 4 pay level and hire two Wastewater Systems Worker III candidates at the Step 5 pay level.			
(6) FUNDING SOURCE(S) Los Osos Wastewater System Fund	(7) CURRENT YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT \$183,677.00	(8) ANNUAL FINANCIAL IMPACT \$367,353.00	(9) BUDGETED? Yes
(10) AGENDA PLACEMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing (Time Est. ____ ) <input type="checkbox"/> Board Business (Time Est. ____ )			
(11) EXECUTED DOCUMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Resolutions <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinances <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A			
(12) OUTLINE AGREEMENT REQUISITION NUMBER (OAR) N/A		(13) BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED? BAR ID Number: N/A <input type="checkbox"/> 4/5 Vote Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	
(14) LOCATION MAP N/A	(15) BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT? No	(16) AGENDA ITEM HISTORY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A    Date: _____	
(17) ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW David E. Grim			
(18) SUPERVISOR DISTRICT(S) District 2			

Reference: 16JAN12-C-10

# County of San Luis Obispo



TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Public Works  
Dean Benedix, Utilities Division Manager

VIA: Mark Hutchinson, Deputy Director of Public Works

DATE: 1/12/2016

SUBJECT: Request approval to hire three (3) Wastewater Systems Workers, at pay level Steps 4 and 5, for the Los Osos Water Recycling Facility. District 2.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve hiring one Wastewater Systems Worker IV candidate at the Step 4 pay level and hire two Wastewater Systems Worker III candidates at the Step 5 pay level.

## **DISCUSSION**

Section 2.48.030(a) of the County Code requires that initial appointments to non-management job classes be at Step 1 of the salary range. Department heads may, however, request a step placement other than Step 1, in accordance with County Code 2.48.060(b)(2). This section allows for placement at a step other than Step 1 when it is difficult to secure qualified personnel or if a person of unusual training, qualifications or experience is available. Under this section, appointments at Step 2 or 3 require approval of the County Administrative Officer (CAO); appointments at Steps 4 or 5 of the salary range require approval by the Board of Supervisors.

This request is for the Board to exercise its discretion and grant appointment of the one Wastewater System Worker IV candidate at a Step 4 and two Wastewater System Worker III candidates at a Step 5 salary range for operations of the Los Osos Water Recycling Facility.

The \$183 million Los Osos Water Recycling Facility (LOWRF) project is nearing completion, with startup scheduled for April 2016. The 49 miles of collection system pipelines and recycled water distribution pipeline, and 21 wastewater pump stations are completed and being serviced monthly by our Utilities Division Water Systems Workers. Upon completion of the LOWRF, the Utilities Division of Public Works will also take over the responsibility of plant operations. A new Chief Plant Operator (CPO) has been hired and is becoming familiarized with the plant facilities, start up plan, and operations structure. The CPO participated in the interview process for hiring Wastewater Systems Workers (WWSW) to operate and maintain the plant and collection system. The LOWRF is a Grade IV plant as classified by the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB).

The Wastewater Systems Workers positions were recently created to provide for staff with a high level of technical expertise in specifically wastewater treatment and operations to operate the new LOWRF. This recruitment is the first for WWSW III and IV level staff.

The minimum qualifications for the WWSW IV are four years' experience as a Waste Water Systems Worker III or equivalent in accordance with the SWRCB requirements, and possession of a valid SWRCB Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator grade IV or higher certification or equivalent. Job duties include acting as the Chief Plant operator under general direction of the CPO, and supervising plant operations and personnel.

The minimum qualifications for the WWSW III are three years' experience as a Waste Water Systems Worker II or equivalent in accordance with the SWRCB requirements, and possession of a valid SWRCB Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator grade III or higher certification or equivalent. Job duties include performing the most complex work assignments, supervising subordinate staff and being designated as "operator in charge" (i. e. "shift operator") as needed.

Attached are the WWSW III and WWSW IV job descriptions.

A recruitment to fill the four WWSW III/IV new positions was advertised in professional trade journals and across multiple recruitment sites. Additionally, individual letters of announcement about the recruitment were sent to all current State of California personnel who are registered as having a Grade 3 or 4 certification. The recruitment resulted in a list of 15 qualified candidates, 5 of which dropped out during the interview process. Of the remaining 10, the top three candidates are those whom are being considered and are the subject of this recommendation. The selection process identified these subject candidates with the certification, experience and skills to be successful in these positions. We believe failure to hire these candidates would cause additional delays with no assurance of finding well qualified and experienced candidates in the future.

The backgrounds of the three subject candidates that are being recommended for a raised step exceed the minimum qualifications of the positions in several areas. Each candidate has one level of wastewater certification higher than required, and each has extensive hands on experience in operations of wastewater plants significantly in excess of the 1.1 million gallon per day capacity of the LOWRF. The WWSW IV candidate has in excess of three times the minimum four years required, and has extensive experience in process control, recycled water systems and in supervision. One WWSW III candidate has over four times the required three years of experience, and has six years' experience operating and maintaining a virtually identical local plant as CPO, as well as having extensive experience in instrumentation, regulatory compliance, and operating process systems. The other WWSW III candidate has eight years of experience as a senior plant operator. This candidate has journeyman experience in instrumentation, process systems and operations optimization. These candidates independently advised they are willing to accept the positions at the salary range of the recommended steps only.

Appointment of these highly qualified candidates at the higher levels and steps is recommended to provide the expertise and experienced staff needed to support the new Chief Plant Operator and provide for a successful startup and operation of this new long anticipated facility and system in Los Osos.

#### **OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT/IMPACT**

The Human Resources Department conducted the recruitment for this position, and advised the department on the process necessary to process this request for hiring these candidates at Step 5 and 4 levels. Human Resources supports this request for advanced step placements.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Annual salary and benefit costs for two Wastewater Systems Worker III positions at Step 5 of the salary range is \$242,590 (\$145,016 salary and \$97,574 benefits) annually. The cost of bringing two candidates in at Step 5 for the remainder of FY 2015-16 is \$121,295 (including salary and benefits). Hiring the most qualified candidates at Step 5 instead of Step 3, which the County Administrative Officer has authority to approve, will cost an additional \$15,692 in salary and benefits annually.

Annual salary and benefit costs for one Wastewater Systems Worker IV position at Step 4 of the salary range is \$124,763 (\$75,411 salary and \$49,352 benefits) annually. The cost of bringing a candidate in at Step 4 for the remainder of FY 2015-16 is \$62,382 (including salary and benefits). Hiring the most qualified candidate at Step 4 instead of Step 3, which the County Administrative Officer has authority to approve, will cost an additional \$5,446 in salary and benefits annually.

The positions will be funded by the Los Osos Waste Water System fund, which is a unique fund classified as an Enterprise General Fund. Expenditures in this fund (including staff salaries) are funded 100% by a rates and charges assessment to property owners. This fund has sufficient monies to pay for the proposed additional \$21,000 of annual labor costs. This request has no impact to the General Fund.

## **RESULTS**

With the impending start-up of the new LOWRF and associated collections and recycling system in April 2016, and scheduled facility and operations contractor training to be provided to County staff in early 2016, the recommended action will allow the department to hire highly qualified, certified, and experienced individuals with proven operational and advanced journey level capabilities to successfully initiate and transition the LOWRF and systems to full operational service to support the Los Osos community. This effective start-up and operational establishment will contribute to the County's efforts to achieve the County's Goals of providing a healthy, livable, prosperous and well governed community.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Wastewater Systems Worker III Job Specification
2. Wastewater Systems Worker IV Job Specification

File: CF 680.190.01

Reference: 16JAN12-C-10

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